

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, April 2, 1987

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For retiring (BP) director

It's 'Fields & Stream' time

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Wilmer C. Fields has known thousands of interesting people during three decades in Southern Baptist journalism. Now he'd like to meet a lot of nice fish.

Fields retired March 31, following almost 28 years as vice president for public relations of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, preceded by three years as editor of the *Mississippi Baptist Record*. His journalistic career followed pastorates in Louisiana, Kentucky, and Mississippi. He was pastor of First Church, Yazoo City, 1951-56.

But his career has been identified with his Executive Committee post, where he has been "Mr. Communications" for Southern Baptists. He has been press representative for the convention and directed Baptist Press, the convention's news service. For almost half his tenure, he also edited *The Baptist Program*, the Executive Committee's magazine.

However, the Fields era of Baptist journalism — a time of growth and change — is ending.

When he took over Baptist Press in the late '50s, Fields and one professional editorial assistant in the office here were "it."

News staffs of Baptist agencies were small, under-staffed and, for the most part, poorly trained. Furthermore, the process for disseminating news to Baptist state papers and the secular media was feeble.

Upon Fields' retirement, Baptist Press has five bureaus plus its central office, with a contributing staff of more than 30 journalists. The press service is distributed to more than 400 subscribers, including 38 Baptist state papers, several hundred secular newspapers, magazines, and TV and radio stations, the major wire services and scores of Baptist leaders worldwide.

Fields continually has been interviewed on television and radio and quoted by newspapers and magazines. For gratis, he wrote an article on Southern Baptists for the *Saturday Evening Post* that sold more than a million reprints. He has presided over the newsroom at 27 Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings that have drawn hundreds of reporters to scrutinize Southern Baptists for a week each June. He has been national president of three major religious news and public relations organizations.

His "summer seminars" have introduced denominational journalists to leaders of secular and religious

news organizations around the world.

Along the way, he has maintained a strong sense of churchmanship and commitment to young people. That has been evidenced by the 20 years he and his wife, Libby, have served in the college Sunday School department of First Church, Nashville.

Incurably curious, Fields has travelled in 96 countries. (That's why he's known worldwide as W.C., although in the Orient it's Wubble-Yu Si; in Germany, Vublsee; in West Texas, Dub Cee.) His home is a museum of social anthropology; the walls are covered with hundreds of memorabilia, from a 1,000-year-old Crusader's helmet to an African tribal spear to almost 200 Raggedy Anns and Andys to a wooden airplane propeller.

The latter is appropriate, for Fields has been a pilot since his college days. He has flown everything from a Pan American Airways DC-4 to a Sweitzer 232 glider. An adventurer, he and his wife and children, Randy, Christy, and Becky, have camped and hiked in forests from Baja California to Labrador, from Key West to the

Pacific coast of Canada.

Fields' curiosity and penchant for words and images, as well as his depth of travel and acquaintances, have made him an inveterate storyteller.

An evening in his home or in a restaurant on one of his journeys is filled with tales of travel, from Alaska's Bering Strait to China's Great Wall to a mission church in Africa to the bayous of his native Louisiana.

But in all his stories, the people he has known shine through. His love for and interest in people stand out as he spins his yarns. The stories are filled with names, and not just cronies and big-shots. He's as likely to recall the name and characteristics of a taxi driver or bellboy as he is the president of the Baptist World Alliance.

That's because people matter. "The thing that comes to my mind most are the friendships — people I've come to know in all kinds of places and circumstances," Fields reflects.

"These have been great years, with so many exhilarating, memorable activities — the big meetings, like the

Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist World Alliance, but also the smaller meetings, like the summer seminars," he notes. "But these have to do with the people there rather than the places."

And although they have produced his most pleasant memories, people also have generated his biggest task: "At every stage of my career, the challenge has been getting people of different viewpoints to work together. There's a personal challenge in getting along with people — people who disagree with me and sometimes I with them. That is the key factor of democracy and of any cooperative effort.

"I've always worked with volunteers, people who have to be persuaded to join in cooperative efforts," he adds. "That's the reason the public relations profession is so congenial with the mission of the church. I've felt my role has been to help people find common goals and ways of supporting each other in reaching those goals."

That task has involved difficulties, but Fields has persevered by holding

onto an ideal: "We have to remember we're all actually in the missionary situation. We have to be deeply committed, not discouraged by setbacks, and undeterred by disagreements. We have to keep moving along, making as much progress as possible, and thanking the Lord when it actually happens."

He's been inspired by Southern Baptist missionaries he's met on five continents. "Missionaries are the most patient people in the world," he says.

As much as he's been a people-person, Fields says that's the area he would work on most if he could pursue his career again: "I'd be more concerned about the personal qualities involved than about institutional relationships. I think I'd try to see the individual in clearer perspective among the throngs of people."

Fields apparently has done a better job of that than he gives himself credit, for the "throngs" have recognized him. Both his alma maters have honored him — Louisiana College with an honorary doctorate and Southern Seminary with an alumnus of the year award. The Baptist Public Relations Association, over which he presided in 1970-71, voted last year to name its annual awards competition after him.

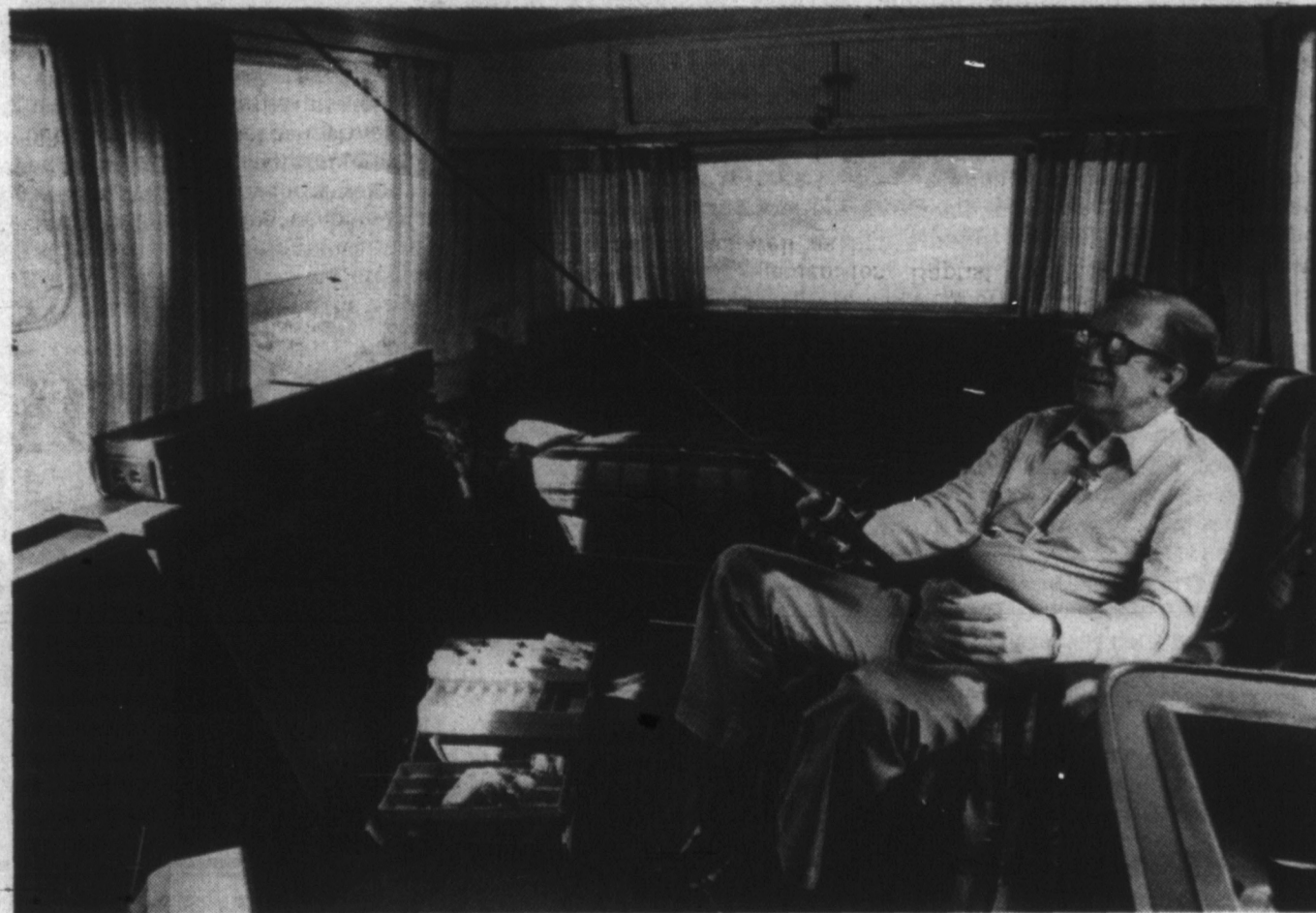
Although his career has been good to him, Fields expresses no sadness at retirement: "I'm filled with happy thoughts. I really am eager to move into a whole new phase of life, having the leisure time to do the things Libby and I have wanted to do." She will retire this June, following 22 years of teaching at Bass Middle School in Nashville.

"Libby and I have a long list of things we want to do," he says. "Most prominent are fishing, hunting, trailering, canoeing, camping, backpacking, and chasing around antique places. Interspersed in all of this will be a lot of time devoted to our seven — soon to be eight — grandchildren scattered in Tennessee, Virginia and Texas."

Like the Apostle Paul, he says, he appreciates all kinds of people. "I'm a debtor to the Greeks and the barbarians, the wise and the unwise," he quotes. "That really captures what I'd like to say — both to friends and those with whom I have disagreed at times. I have some sense of gratitude to them all."

And if all goes as planned, Fields will have a special sense of gratitude to some guide who introduces him to a really nice mess of fish.

Marv Knox is BP feature editor.



'Fields & Stream' Time — Wilmer C. Fields examines a new fishing pole as he contemplates life following his career as a Southern Baptist journalist. Fields, vice president for public relations of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, retired

March 31, concluding more than three decades as a denominational communicator. He and his wife, Libby, plan to take their travel trailer on the road after she retires from teaching school this spring. (BP) photo by Jim Veerman

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Editorials . . . by Don McGregor

A trashy generation?

Mississippi has many beautiful country lanes that are a delight to drive along. They are, that is, until thoughtless persons desecrate them by throwing trash along the roadside.

Some lovely, tree-lined, shaded roads look like the county garbage dump with fried chicken boxes, paper sacks, beverage cans, bottles, and whatever else inconsiderate drivers have decided to leave for someone else to have to pick up.

Americans of this generation have become a throw away society, and a great deal of what is thrown away lands by the side of the road. It seems that most of our refuse is generated as we move about in our cars. And this may be a natural result of our spending so much time going from one place to another.

The world, however, was not intended by its Creator to be our personal

trash receptacle.

There are laws against such littering, but they do no good. It is not often that a patrolman sees such an act, for the trashiest places are the loveliest roads that are not well patrolled because they don't have a heavy load of traffic.

So the trashy person buys his chicken or hamburger and cold drink in town and leaves the wrappings beside the road. A few conscientious people try to keep it picked up, but the task is far beyond them.

What is the solution? There are at least three courses of action. One is to help pick up the trash, but there are not too many who want to do this. While it fails to get at the heart of the problem, it would surely help. Another is to not join in the trashy society by throwing out litter out of the car window, and this is vital. And the third is

to continue to call upon the authorities to do something about the problem. They may feel that they have more important things to do, but we can't allow the world to become a trash pile.

God gave us a beautiful dwelling place. Let's not allow it to get messed up with our own junk.

The most blighted area in the world is said to be the South Bronx in New York City, where block after block after block of apartment buildings have been destroyed by their occupants. It is the same mentality exercised on a lesser scale that would cause someone to throw his trash out beside the road.

We go to New York and say, "How awful." We seem to pay little attention to the beautiful country lanes in Mississippi.

"Is it nothing to you, all ye who pass by . . . ?" Lam. 1:12.

Part Two Of Two Parts

Guest opinion . . .

Home missions: it's farther than you think

By Gail Pucik

Our US-2 assignment was to minister as Associate Pastor and wife to the First Baptist Church of Beverly Hills. Our church was very "non-traditional" in its constituency. We are a small congregation. We have a core membership of approximately 90-100 members, and at the time we arrived the pastor and his wife were the only other married couple in our church. Our members were primarily young single adults. We have since grown to include many families, some with children. Our church is located in a very transient area between West Hollywood and Beverly Hills. We have a turnover rate of 48 percent each year. From one year to the next, one only has a 50-50 chance of having a repeat contact with a person at the same address.

Traditional means of visitation aren't operable in our area. Most apartments and homes are security buildings with security systems intact. And it is advisable never in L.A. to allow someone with whom you aren't closely acquainted to enter your home. Door-to-door visitation in our area is virtually a waste of time. Most of our outreach is channeled toward people who have already visited our church and expressed an interest in attending. To attract new visitors, we have found many favorable responses to the use of brochures in direct mail marketing techniques.

There are many factors which influence the ministry and the program

of our church. The key word for us is flexibility. Our members are so unique in personalities, careers, and backgrounds that our ministry must meet the key needs of our members. We have members who are Italian, German, French, Hispanic, Central American, and Americans from all over the United States. We have members who are in a variety of careers from secretaries, waiters, and teachers to assistant costume designer and regular supporting actor in two popular syndicated television shows. Two of our members are playwrights, one of whom has a successful play currently on stage in L.A. One member is an accomplished interior decorator; another is in public relations for the armed forces. One is a jeweler, and another records music for commercials. Some of our members travel 30-45 minutes to attend our services. All of these variables influence our program and our ministry. We have a strong ministry in spite of our many obstacles. We are blessed to be led by a wonderful committed couple of missionaries, who have served the Home Mission Board for 20 years, Bob and Glenda Tremaine. Our church has organized 12 missions in the past eight years under their leadership. We are currently organizing the 13th, and we are in the planning stages of the 14th.

Today I am a mother of 2 precious little girls, Rachel who is 2 years and 9 months, and Laura, who is 9 months

old. My husband and my children are my primary ministry. Our service here has extended a year and a half since our US-2 term ended. We're no longer official Home Mission Board personnel. We do, however, receive Church Pastoral Assistance from California Southern Baptists. Our church pays a portion of our salary, and we raise \$875.00 in addition per month in order to live and work here. We have not felt the call of God to serve elsewhere.

In some ways, I have changed. My understanding has changed radically since I've come to live and work in Los Angeles. My perspective will never be the same. Hollywood has lost a lot of glamour. I see that television and film all too often reflect the desperate, tragic attempts of real-life people on a mad search for approval, love, and understanding.

I've grown much by experience, perspective, and maturity. But some difficult things I face will never change. It is difficult to live so far away from family and friends. Most of the time we can't afford to fly back to see our family and friends; and, because of our two-week vacation period, we don't have time to drive back for a visit. Home missionaries don't receive regular furloughs to rest and visit families as our foreign missionaries do. And often the home missionary who travels to share at a world Missions Conference must do so on his own work time and at his own expense.

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April 12, 1987

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April 12 is Cooperative Program Sunday. This is a time and date of enormous significance.

The Cooperative Program is not sacred. It never should be considered as such. It does, however, provide for us a very effective system for carrying out the Great Commission. And that is what the Cooperative Program is. It is a Great Commission channel.

All of the areas of support that the Cooperative Program touches are not agreed upon by everybody. This is well known by all. All of these areas, however, were agreed on by majority vote at conventions. That is the way we make decisions.

Mainly, the Cooperative Program is missions. It is all of the missions programs that are carried on beyond the local church. And we are all aware that our missions efforts must reach out beyond the walls of our churches.

Even though the Cooperative Program is not sacred, and even though it finances some entities that are subject to the objections of some, it is

surely a marvelous way to carry on missions work in an organized, substantial, and dependable fashion. Our missionaries do know that they can depend on us to keep the effort going, for the Cooperative Program is so constituted that every worker can know that his livelihood and the tools that he needs will be furnished. He is able to concentrate on his task, of witnessing, for the folks back home are participating in his ministry by providing him the wherewithal to do it and guaranteeing him that they will keep on doing so.

That is worthwhile effort. The Cooperative Program is 62 years old. Yet there may be many in the younger generations who do not know what the total concept is. They need to be taught.

It is not preaching about money to explain the ministry of the Cooperative Program. It is helping to carry out the Great Commission.

Every succeeding generation needs to be told about the Cooperative Program.

I still experience isolation as we live in an area where families and homemakers aren't plentiful. It never would have occurred to me as a Southern Baptist in Mississippi that life for some of our home missionaries would be as difficult, lonely, and foreign.

I've had many wonderful experiences here, though. Ministering in an area where there aren't a number of traditional concepts and expectations for the minister's wife has allowed me the freedom for the development of my own ministry. Although I am very

(Continued on page 4)

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Bayside group believes "no room for spectators"

By Tim Nicholas

Richard Alford, consultant for the Cooperative Missions Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, was speaking at Bayside Baptist Church during a World Missions Conference in February. Discussing literacy needs, Alford told the group "Often times adults are ashamed to admit they haven't learned to read and write."

At that point, a young man in the

congregation raised his hand. "I'm not ashamed to admit it; I can't read and write."

The man explained to Alford and his church that recently his young nephew had asked him to read a story to him, but he couldn't read it. A new Christian, the young man said he had not thought reading was important while in school. "I know better now," he said.

Alford recounts, "He looked at me eyeball to eyeball and asked me, 'Can you help me learn?'" Alford explained what he could do, which was to help set up a workshop where local volunteers can learn how to teach others how to read.

That process is already underway, according to Don Creel, pastor of the

(Continued on page 6)



The Creels of Bayside

Don and Peggy Creel stand in front of the trailers in which Bayside Baptist Church meets on the Gulf Coast. To show growth potential, the church had a Vacation Bible School with 113 enrolled and attendance of more than 80 in two daily sessions. Says Creel, "There's no room for spectators here." He adds, "We're trying to mold together a team to do something for the Lord."

The Second Front Page

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, April 2, 1987

Published Since 1877

Southern Baptists give \$9 million for hunger

By Tim Fields

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Southern Baptists gave more than \$9 million to worldwide hunger relief in 1986, the second-largest amount ever given through the denomination's Foreign and Home Mission Boards.

The 1986 total of \$9,089,279 was 23 percent less than the record \$11.8 million given in 1985, but nearly a \$2 million increase over the amount given in 1984. The 1986 total is more than \$8 million above 1977 contributions.

For 1986, the Foreign Mission Board reported receipts of \$7,790,128, compared with \$10,625,897 in 1985 and

\$6,548,901 in 1984. Thirty-four percent of the 1986 receipts came during the last two months of the year after the observance of the denomination's World Hunger Day in October.

Unlike the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Mission Board's hunger contributions climbed slightly to \$1,299,151 in 1986 from \$1,204,249 in 1985.

The 1986 figure was more than twice the \$617,817 received in 1984. "The increase in domestic hunger giving, beginning in 1985, reflects in large measure the implementation of the 1981 Southern Baptist Convention

recommendation that undesignated contributions to world hunger be divided, with 80 percent going to the Foreign Mission Board and 20 percent going to the Home Mission Board," said Robert Parham, director of hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "Several state conventions, however, still send almost all their hunger receipts to the Foreign Mission Board," he said.

Mississippi Baptists send undesignated hunger funds at the

(Continued on page 4)

Reagan proclaims May 7 National Day of Prayer

WASHINGTON (BP) — President Reagan has proclaimed May 7 as a National Day of Prayer.

Congress in 1952 adopted a resolution calling upon the nation's president to set aside and proclaim a National Day of Prayer each year.

In a written proclamation, Reagan urged U.S. citizens to gather together May 7 "in homes and places of worship to pray, each after his or her own manner, for unity of the hearts of all mankind."

The president wrote: "America has lived through many a cold, dark night, when the cupped hands of prayer were our only shield against the extinction of courage. Though that flame has flickered

from time to time, it burns brightest when we are willing, as



we ought to be now, to turn our faces and our hearts to God not only at moments of personal danger and civil strife, but in the full flower of the liberty, peace, and abundance that he has showered upon us."

Nigerians respond to loss with prayer, praise, song

By Mary Jane Welch

IBADAN, Nigeria (BP) — Christians in northern Nigeria returned to burned-out church buildings, picked blocks from the rubble for seating, and held joyous worship services the Sunday after Muslim-Christian riots shook the area.

Christian churches throughout the Zaria and Kaduna areas also were meeting at 9 a.m. daily for praise and prayer, said Don Reece, chairman of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Nigeria. "It was quite a witness to the people who had done all the damage," he said.

Thirteen Baptist church buildings were among the Christian churches burned in Kaduna state and a couple of neighboring towns after riots that left 13 dead and most Christian churches in Zaria burned, reported Reece after a survey trip through the area

March 18 and 19. S.T. Ola Akande, general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, and four other convention staffers also were part of the survey team. "We went to encourage them, and I think we were encouraged," said Reece.

The survey team estimated damage to Baptist property at about \$37 million.

Five church buildings in the Kaduna area, seven in Zaria and one in the home mission area around Funtua were burned, said Reece. The survey team feels parts of two buildings can be salvaged but thinks the other 10 will have to be razed and rebuilt. There are more than 200 Baptist churches in the affected Baptist associations.

(Continued on page 5)



Baptist Men's Conference

The annual Baptist Men's Conference took place March 21 at Parkway Baptist Church, Jackson, with more than 400 registered for the banquet portion. Bill Hogue, head of the Baptist General Convention of California, was the principal speaker, talking about the necessity of prayer in all mission work. A total of seven ministry group sessions were held in conjunc-

tion with the conference. According to Paul Harrell, director of the Brotherhood Department which sponsors the event, virtually every ministry skill can be utilized today through one of the ministry groups organized in Mississippi. Newest groups include educators and builders.

Home missions: it's farther than you think

(Continued from page 2)
 busy as a mother and a wife, I've learned to value the advantages of my role.

Since there aren't a number of families in our area, single adults cherish the warmth and hospitality of our home. I am busy with my daughters; but I have free time because I work at home to devote to special baking for busy, elderly, sick and lonely members. I have time to create special homemade gifts and to write notes to be sent to those who need special encouragement. I can make informative telephone calls to those who have expressed an interest in our church's brochures. I can make phone calls to many telephone owners to invite them to a home Bible study. I can make "Happy Birthday" calls to our members. And I can even lighten the work load of my husband, on his request, by dealing with general matters with members and businesses over the phone. I can

minister to our pastor's family by volunteering to transport their daughter to school and back home again and by offering to assist them with menial tasks like gift wrapping. I can help plan church fellowships and special events. I can babysit for new mothers in our church and give them a little time to themselves. I can invite a hurting member out to lunch or into my home for fellowship. I can help the pastor who has extra typing or filing that needs to be done. I can write letters to friends and family "back home," updating them on our ministry and our prayer needs. And the list goes on. One of the most rewarding areas of ministry has been relationship building. God has given me an abundance of opportunities to listen, comfort, encourage, and to love. Because I am flexible and I do have some periods of "free time" I

have a wonderful chance to minister in many ways.

And yes, even living in Los Angeles has its benefits. The world has its eyes on our front porch. Los Angeles truly is a "cutting edge" for missions. I praise God that I have had the opportunity to participate in his work here. My prayer is that in this season of prayer and offering for the work of home missions that you will remember that many have sacrificed their lives, their desires, their dreams, and their comfort to serve our Lord through missions in the United States. Those sacrifices are no less than the sacrifices made by our foreign missionaries.

Mrs. Gail Pucik was born in Yazoo City, Miss., and grew up in Fulton. Her home church is New Home Baptist Church, Fulton.

Southern Baptists give

(Continued from page 3)
 ratio of 80-20 to the-FMB and HMB, respectively.

The 1986 hunger gifts represent a decline in per capita giving among Southern Baptists, from 82 cents in 1985 to 63 cents. Only Southern Baptists in Hawaii surpassed the \$2 per capita level by giving \$2.01 per person. The next-highest was Virginia, with \$1.76.

The 1986 figures do not reflect money given for hunger that was utilized in local churches, associations, and state conventions. Such information on a convention-wide basis presently is unavailable.

The available information suggests a considerable amount of hunger money was either spent on the local level or used for special state mission projects related to hunger, Parham said.

Baptist state conventions in South Carolina and Virginia, for example, each keep five percent of the hunger gifts which pass through their state offices. Georgia retains 10 percent of its hunger gifts, while North Carolina keeps 25 percent.

"In spite of financial hardships in many of the oil- and farm-based economies, and in spite of a dearth of U.S. media coverage about overseas hunger, Southern Baptist support for world hunger programs administered by the Home and Foreign Mission Boards remains strong," Parham said. "Southern Baptists, however, still are giving less than \$1 per person each year to feed the hungry and to help them to feed themselves. We must continue to be generous with our energies and financial resources in support of Southern Baptist domestic and overseas hunger programs."

Tim Fields writes for the Christian Life Commission.

The best way to remember people is in prayer.



State executive leaders

Tom Madden, (center) executive secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, is president of the Southern Baptist Association of State Executive Directors. He is flanked by the other officers: Jack B. Johnson (left) of Arizona, secretary; and Ernest B. Myers of Nevada, president-elect. (BP) photo

Neshoba Baptists send relief monies to Jones

The churches of Neshoba Baptist Association sponsored a Radiothon and disaster relief fund raising for the victims of the tornado which devastated a vast area of Jones County.

On March 14, radio station WWSL broadcast live from the Wal-Mart, Sunflower Shopping Center an appeal for donations. Wal-Mart provided the location and Sunflower Food Store the necessary telephone line for the location broadcast. The staff of WWSL donated their time and Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company provided gifts of Pepsi Cola. Youths and adults from area churches manned the receiving area.

\$1,333.50 was received through the radiothon and additional funds were raised in local Baptist churches totaling more than \$8,300 in all. The money has been forwarded to Jones County Baptist Association to assist needy families in rebuilding their homes and getting their families back together.

A U-haul truck loaded with food and clothing had been sent to the Jones County area earlier.

Five churches send goods and cash

Five Baptist churches, which includes Louise, Silver City, Isola, and Eastside, Belzoni, sent a truck load of canned goods, dishes and cooking utensils to Jones County for the tornado victims. Also, \$800 was sent to help on the repairing of a parsonage, reports Mrs. J. A. Sanders, Louise Church.

Powers restricted

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Supreme Court has limited the power of states to restrict "indecent" programs on cable television, by affirming a lower court ruling overturning Utah law.



Editor leaders

Presnall H. Wood, (center) editor of the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, is president of the Southern Baptist Press Association. He is flanked by the other officers: Herb Hollinger, (left) editor of the California Southern Baptist, president-elect; and Jack E. Brymer Sr., editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, secretary. (BP) photo.

Churches adopt Annuity plan

The following churches have adopted the Expanded Annuity Plan of 1988 since those reported in the Feb. 26 issue of the Baptist Record:

Adams: Cloverdale; Calhoun: Banner; Clarke: Bucatunna; Gulf Coast: FBC Biloxi; Holmes-Leflore: FBC Durant, FBC Itta Bena; Jasper: Heidelberg, Lake Como; Lauderdale: Mt. Vernon; Lincoln: Wellman; Mississippi: New Zion; Pike: Fellowship; Pontotoc: FBC Pontotoc; Scott: Homewood; Simpson: Braxton, Corinth; Warren: Northside, Trinity; Winston: Noxapater, South Louisville; Yalobusha: Bethel.

Associations which have adopted the plan since those last reported in the Feb. 19 issue: Jones and Washington.

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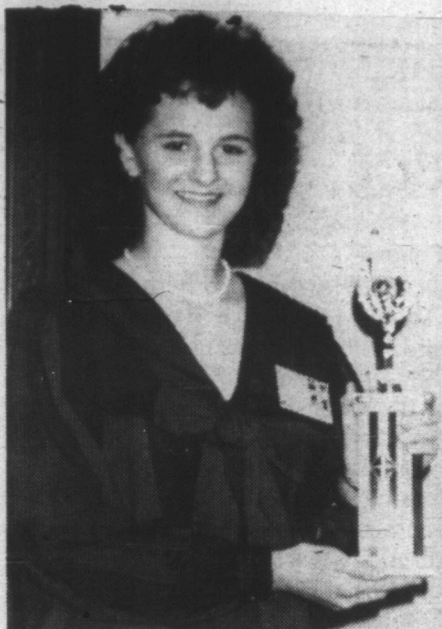
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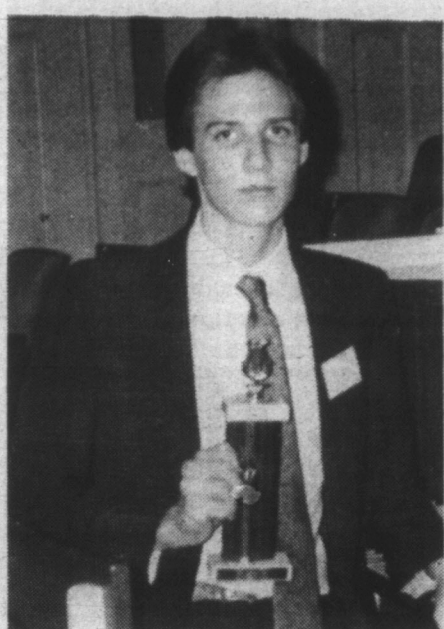
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Thursday, April 2, 1987



Price Williams



Jeff Clearman



These are summer workshop scholarship winners from left: Melissa Knight, McKay Pearce, Lee Shaw, and Susan Lofton.

Music festival winners named

First Church, Brandon, was host of the State Baptist Youth Four-Part Music Festival on Feb. 21, in which youths from across the state participated in keyboard, vocal, conducting, and instrumental areas. Participation in the festival is open to youths in grades 10-12.

Keyboard participants must first receive all superior ratings in all adjudicated areas of category IV piano and advanced organ in the District Keyboard Festival.

The Church Music Department offers two types of scholarships through this festival. A Baptist Summer Event Scholarship is offered to all youths who earn superior ratings. A college scholarship is offered to each graduating senior at the Mississippi Baptist college of their choice who receives superior ratings in all adjudicated areas. The college music department also presents a matching music scholarship.

The following youths earned \$25 awards as Baptist Summer Music Event Scholarships — in the vocal area: Melissa Knight, Ellisville; Lee Shaw, Pascagoula; Susan Lofton, Gautier; McKay Pearce, Purvis; in the instrumental area: Michelle Perry, Grenada; McKay Pearce, Pur-



Michael Crawley



Michelle Perry



Joe Driver

vis; Joe Driver, Pascagoula, Michael Crawley, Brandon; in the conducting area: Michael Crawley, Brandon; Joe Driver, Pascagoula; in the keyboard area: Jeff Clearman, Petal; Michelle Perry, Grenada; Stephanie Stephens, Eupora; Wendi Faith Dallas, Cleveland; Jenny Hight, Ocean Springs; Jackie Mitchell, Cleveland; Greg Palmer, Madison; Pamela Norton, Greenwood Springs; Karla Andrews, Vicksburg; Gina Godwin, Newton; Teresa Tapp, Amory; Susan Lofton, Gautier; Belinda Wiseman, Southaven; Exyah Swain, Columbus; Price Williams, McComb; Traci Powell, Toombs; Shelly Langley, Taylorsville; Stephanie Dianne Petty, Grenada; Jodie Smyly, Leland; Ann Marie Benjamin, Picayune; Pam Powers, Vicksburg; Christie

Manasco, Aberdeen; Leslie Stokes, Columbus.

The following youths earned \$200 college music scholarships — in the instrumental area: Michelle Perry, Grenada; in the keyboard area: Jeff Clearman, Petal; Michelle Perry, Grenada; Stephanie Stephens, Eupora; Susan Lofton, Gautier; Exyah Swain, Columbus; Price Williams, McComb; Leslie Stokes, Columbus.

Jeff Clearman was awarded the judges' trophy for his outstanding performance in the organ category and Price Williams was awarded the judges' trophy for her outstanding performance in the piano category.

At the table are five of the six keyboard judges: from left, they are Jennie Lou Breland, Terry McRoberts, Janet Taylor, Ralph Taylor, and J. Edward Ludlow. The other keyboard judge was Billy Trotter. Vocal judges were Nell Adams, Roxanna McIntire, and Edwina Thedford. Instrumental and conducting judge was James Schlater. In the pews are parents, teachers, and guests.

Russians to get supply of Bibles

NEW YORK, NY, (ABS) — Russian Christians are to get a further supply of Bibles and hymn books from the United Bible Societies in a project financed in part by the American Bible Society.

Authorities in the U.S.S.R. have given official permission for the Moscow-based All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists to import 10,000 large-size Bibles and 10,000 hymnals in Russian, both specially printed in Western Europe.

The Scriptures are being produced in Stuttgart, West Germany, by the United Bible Societies, the worldwide fellowship to which the ABS belongs. Shipment overland from the city to Moscow is expected to take place in June.

UBS will bear the cost of production and shipping to the Russian capital, with the American Bible Society providing a part of the cost.

Nigerians

(Continued from page 3)

Besides the churches, two nursery and primary schools run by Baptist churches were burned, and five pastors, including the home missionary in Funtua, lost their homes. The team learned of only one Baptist who was injured. F.T. Lateju, pastor of Orie Ofe Baptist Church, required stitches after being hit over the head with a club.

Already Nigerian Christians are giving through the Christian Association of Nigerians in a number of states, including Kaduna, to help Christians who lost everything, said Reece. Akande has written a letter to all Nigerian Baptist churches asking their help, and Reece sent a telegram on behalf of the Nigerian convention asking aid from the Baptist World Alliance. His own church in Ibadan, far to the southwest, already has responded with an offering of about \$300, he said.

Nigerian Baptists are handling immediate needs, but the mission organization hopes to offer some assistance in the long-term aid for reconstruction, Reece said.

Reece said Nigerian Baptists have reacted "in a beautiful way." Mosques were reported damaged in only one city, Kafanchan, where the rioting started among university students. Newspapers reported three mosques in that city were burned, he said.

Mary Jane Welch writes for the FMB.

A child educated only at school is an uneducated individual.

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Cope Schedule, ACTS Network

CD = DAY COPE
CP = NIGHT COPE

Date:	Guest:	Topic:
Wed., April 1	CD Bob Handly CP Ken Johnson	Anxiety & Panic Attacks Marriage Relationships
Thurs., April 2	CD Ben Loring CP Ben Loring	Open Lines Open Lines
Friday, April 3	CD Karen Hayter CP Susan & Pam Pohly	Self-Esteem Adult Children of Alcoholics
Mon., April 6	CD Paul Meier CP Paul Meier	Depression Depression
Tues., April 7	CD Beverly Runyon CP Mary Lee Hafley	Parenting Parenting
Wed., April 8	CD Cathey Brown CP Dan McGee	Children of Alcoholics Stress Management
Thurs., April 9	CD Ben Loring CP Ben Loring	Open Lines Open Lines

A great many so-called open minds should be closed for repairs.

Intelligence is like a river — the deeper it flows the less noise it makes.

Bayside group believes "no room for spectators"

(Continued from page 3)

young mission church which in itself is an outlet for ministry.

Bayside Baptist Church (Creel avoids the use of the term mission which he believes can become a stigma.) in the Bayside Park community of Hancock County is "strictly new territory" says Creel. "There's never been a church here before," he says. With no housing codes and with dirt roads that become quagmires after each rain, the community is an isolated one.

The work at Bayside is a mission outreach of First Church, Bay St. Louis. Gulf Coast Association also participates. First Church pastor Nathan Barber says of Creel's presence. "The Lord worked it out."

The church had planned for a while to do Sunday School and a Bible study in the area. Creel's appearance in the community helped make possible a full time work at Bayside, said Barber.

Don Creel didn't begin in ministry. He was a retired Army major who got into farming in 1968. "I thought I had it made and the Lord called me into ministry."

He started preaching in 1972 and went back to school in 1979, earning an undergraduate degree from Belmont College in Nashville, and a master of religious education degree in 1980 from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Along the way, he helped start Highland Baptist Church, Hohenwald, Tenn., and was its pastor for 12 years.

He'd been preaching at the nearby Natchez Trace Wilderness Preserve and began to feel led toward resort missions. He attended a resort missions conference in Colorado in 1984, meeting Richard Alford. They kept in contact and Alford invited Creel to Mississippi to do a resort/camping area survey of ministries in south Mississippi.

After the survey, Creel stayed in the Bay St. Louis area, joined First Church there, and helped establish a singles ministry in the church. He and

his wife, Peggy, married in November, 1985.

Barber says Creel came to the church willing to work and Barber suggested Creel get involved in the just-beginning Bayside work. Creel became pastor as it started in April of 1985 and has remained as pastor since. Peggy is church clerk.

When he began the work, he began knocking on doors in the Bayside Park community where he and Peggy make their home.

The children responded first and First Church decided to utilize its van to pick up the children for the mission church instead of continuing to bring them to First Church as had been the practice.

David Ratcliff, a retired boiler-maker had been asked by former youth director, Bob White, to pick up the kids from Bayside. He agreed, thinking it would be only for a short time. He became friends with Creel and the two have continued in ministry there at Bayside.

Ratcliff still makes the rounds picking up children and teaches a Sunday School class at Bayside. "I've always gotten along with children," says Ratcliff, who has six kids of his own. "I just hit it off real well with them. Realizing the needs of the kids, especially out there, the more I worked with them, the more I felt the Lord had wanted me to get into this area."

"I want to emphasize David's dedication," says Barber who estimates it takes Ratcliff up to an hour and a half to make his rounds. "Some of these are rough kids, but David's as faithful in doing that as sitting in a pew."

There are 60 members (There have been eight baptisms and six members by letter since October) with Sunday School currently running about 25. It's the children's behavior that causes attendance to rise and fall. "We can get 50-60 kids in here (a double-wide trailer)," says Creel. "The problem is controlling them once you get them here... They would take over your service."

Creel says his forte is not in work-

ing with children and that he could use a youth director, and, for that matter, a song leader. "The only way is for someone to come and serve free gratis. We could put them up and feed them." Creel says he could use the help this summer or for as long as a person could stay.

Though the ministry started with children, a number of adults are a part of the church. "An intensive visitation program — that's our key — knocking on doors," says Creel. "We have accumulated a very dedicated hard core group around which we intend to build a permanent church."

Member Vivian Echols says she feels she and her husband have grown spiritually since they've come to Bayside. Their 17-year old daughter, Crystal, is church organist and has dedicated herself to be a missionary.

The church meets in two trailers — a doublewide owned by Gulf Coast association on three lots purchased by the association and a siglewide which was rebuilt from the floor up by Creel and church members. It would take the equivalent of eight lots to build on.

Granny Seay says there is just over \$1,000 in the church building fund. "We might not reach that goal, but that's our aim," she says.

The adult members are aiming high, and working at their goal — a permanent, full time church. They go witnessing in the community on Saturday mornings. "The way a church grows is by prayer and witnessing," says Granny Seay. "There's no church at all unless there's prayer." Members participate in the association's seamen's center, and do weekly visitations to a local nursing home.

"We have to be open to a lot of criticism from the community," says Paul Layton. "Being in church is like driving in behind enemy lines under fire. We continue to take abuse. If we're not willing to do that, we shouldn't even try."

Says the young man whom the church will teach how to read, "I used to get into mischief. This church has more or less saved my life. Now I live for the Lord."

Devotional

Neglect

By Alvis K. Cooper

Someone has said that the best way for something to die or become useless is to simply neglect it.



Cooper his business will soon close his office. By the same principle, a person who neglects his soul will soon die without Christ.

The writer of Hebrews said, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation... (Hebrews 2:3)?" We cannot escape the consequences if we neglect the principles of God. Take for example the person who begins to renege or to default on his or her commitment to God. The saved person who does that is headed for hard times. Usually backsliding does not happen all at one time. It becomes a step by step process away from God. Usually it will start with an un-Christlike attitude.

If that unholy attitude is allowed to control us it will lead us far-

ther and farther down the trail away from God. As one withdraws from God one draws nearer to the whims of the devil. The work we are doing for God becomes a drag instead of a joy. Church attendance becomes a burden instead of a blessing. Giving to God's causes becomes selfish greed instead of grateful opportunity for service. The person becomes sour instead of saturated with God's sweet spirit.

Some of God's children never make it back from their backsliding — their service to God is forever forfeited — many times it leads to broken marriages, broken homes, broken lives, ruined dreams, or even death. Giving up opportunities of service to God is no gain. Dropping out of attending church is no encouragement for others. Neglecting your soul and spiritual life will not bring you satisfaction but will bring you sorrow instead. Neglecting your church and your duties in it will soon lead to a deadness in the church and in your life. Only God will be able to revive either. God's word to you is to repent and do right.

Alvis Cooper is pastor, West Corinth Church, Corinth.



Intensive care

*Drugs are just as deadly
as a loaded gun.*

*Don't take chances
with your life*

Swallowing pride doesn't cause indigestion

The following is a personal experience written by a young woman who lives a life of happy sobriety. The retreat mentioned is one of the special social activities of persons who have been through treatment at Mississippi Baptist Chemical Dependency Center.

"Time is drawing near for the annual Alpha retreat at Lake Tiakokhata. When I was asked to write a short article about what the retreat means to me, I didn't know where to begin. Several years ago I left treatment to go to the Alpha House. That same week I went on my first Alpha retreat. It was a great way to begin life on the 'outside' after treatment for chemical dependency. I thought, 'Wow! I'll get some tan, eat some good seafood, swim, and enjoy other fun activities.' I did get to do all these things. The greatest gift, though, was fellowship with other folks like me. On Friday night we had a big meeting. Everyone who wanted to had already spoken, but I thought, 'You can't sit down and keep your mouth shut as grateful as you are.' I was scared to

death, but I got up in front of all those folks and told them about my gratitude, which has yet to dwindle after all this time. Although most of you may not be fresh out of treatment like I was at that time, I would love to share with you about living sober, meeting new friends, seeing old friends, acting crazy, and having fun. I want this retreat to be a regular activity for me each year. I wouldn't miss it! Hope you won't either!"

Questions addressed to "Intensive Care" are forwarded to Chaplain Joe Stovall at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center and are handled in consultation with the staff of the Chemical Dependency Center. Inquiries should be addressed to:

Intensive Care
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P. O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205

Does your faith move mountains, or do mountains move your faith?

A great many so-called open minds should be closed for repairs.

Intelligence is like a river — the deeper it flows the less noise it makes.



Baptist Men's Conference

These are officers of the newly-established Construction Fellowship which met during the Baptist Men's Conference last week at Parkway Church, Jackson. From left, they are Hiram Powell, president, Parkway Church, Jackson; Clinton L. Ivey, projects coordinator, Calvary Church, Jackson; Mrs. Floyd (Clara) Lewis, secretary, First Church, Brandon; and James May, vice president, First Church, Florence. The construction fellowship is designed to provide support in construction to

missionaries in the U.S. and overseas. A data bank is being created to identify volunteers and their skills. Those interested in participating should contact the Brotherhood Department, Box 530, Jackson, Miss. 39205, 968-3800. Explaining the kind of spirit needed for the work, M. B. Howard, a Mission Service Corps volunteer with the Brotherhood Commission, told the 64 participants, "You become an ordained 'gofer' in construction work." At right is Bill Hogue, conference speaker.



Missouri elects Wideman

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP) — Donald V. Wideman was unanimously elected executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention March 17 during a special called meeting of the convention's executive board.

Wideman, 59, currently is pastor of First Church, North Kansas City, Mo. Scheduled to assume office May 11, he will succeed interim executive director Tom Nelson, who has served since Nov. 7, 1986. Nelson was elected following the Nov. 6 death of Rheubin L. South, the convention's executive director from 1975 to 1986.

Convention President John Hughes,

pastor of First Church, Independence, presided over the called meeting, which lasted less than one hour.

In addition to serving Southern Baptists as SBC second vice president, Wideman has been a member of the the SBC Committee on Committees, Committee on Boards and chairman of the local arrangements committee for the 1984 annual meeting. He also has been a trustee of Southwestern Seminary, and a member of the executive council for Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary.

Stanley declines PTL post

ATLANTA (BP) — Former Southern Baptist Convention President Charles Stanley first accepted, but one day later declined, membership on the board of directors of the PTL Club in the wake of the resignation of Jim Bakker.

Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., and new chairman of the PTL board, had announced Stanley had agreed to serve on the board of directors along with five others.

Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, issued a statement to news media the next day saying he could not be a member of PTL's

board.

Fred Powell, senior associate pastor of the midtown Atlanta church, acknowledged that Stanley had told Falwell in a telephone conversation he was willing to serve.

"However, after consulting with advisors at the First Baptist Church in Atlanta, it was determined that in the light of Dr. Stanley's previous and prolonged involvement in Southern Baptist Convention activities and the growth and demands of his present ministry, it was best not to do so," the statement said.

Baptist evangelist James Robison of Texas is among new PTL board members.

"Jesus of Nazareth" to be shown

The story of Jesus on earth — from his birth, through the days of his teachings and miracles, to the agony of the Crucifixion and the spiritual power of the Resurrection — is told in the eight-hour biblical epic "Jesus of Nazareth," to be rebroadcast over

four nights, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, April 12, 13, 14 and 15 (8-10 p.m. Central Time each night). "Jesus of Nazareth" was most recently telecast on NBC during the Easter season of 1984.

Sunday afternoon, March 22, I celebrated my birthday by going with Grace Lovelace to someone else's birthday party. The honoree, Mrs. A. L. Goodrich, looked beautiful in a blue dress, a nice contrast with her red hair. It brought out the blue in her eyes just right. I would never have guessed that she would be 90 on March 26.

Mrs. Goodrich was Evie Landrum when Dr. Goodrich proposed in 1937. She was working for the state WMU Department and he was circulation manager of the Baptist Record. He was a widower and the father of five children, La Una, Thyra, John Wright, Rose Ellen, and Jean.

Dr. Goodrich was editor of the Baptist Record who hired me in 1953 to come to work in Mississippi, and I've

always been grateful to him for that. Since he died in 1956, Mrs. Goodrich has continued to live in their house on College Street in Clinton and be a member of First Baptist Church, Clinton. In fact, she taught kindergarten in that church a good many years. A few years ago she wrote some devotionals for the Baptist Record that were exceedingly well received.

It had been a long time — 25 or more years — since I had seen any of Dr. Goodrich's children, so I was glad for the opportunity to see them again. It was they who gave the birthday party for Mrs. Goodrich in the fellowship hall of First Church, Clinton.

Rose Ellen is married to Joe Omisano, an architect, and lives in

Atlanta. Jean's husband, Walden Houseman, is a contractor; they live in Decatur, Ga.; La Una Ling, a widow for the past three years, also lives in Atlanta; Thyra Shield, who lives near Miami, did not come because of illness; John Wright Goodrich lives in Highland, North Carolina (which was Dr. Goodrich's native state). One of John Wright's sons is a preacher. There are 13 grandchildren; many of them were present for the party. Also Jean's foster son was there. She has at various times been foster mother to 32 children.

Best wishes, Mrs. Goodrich, for your next decade or two! I'm glad I got to share in your celebration. That and the lilting spring day were enough to give me a new lease on life!

Cargo plane takes food to Ecuador

MIAMI (BP) — More than 65,000 pounds of food and clothing donated by Southern Baptists departed March 18 for earthquake-stricken Ecuador in South America.

About 40,000 pounds of cargo from Winterhaven, Fla., arrived March 17, reported Cameron Byler, national disaster relief coordinator for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

A Boeing 707 was donated to transport the cargo for the four-hour flight to Quito, the capital of Ecuador.

Officials with the airline requested anonymity for their company.

Food was bought in large quantities below wholesale prices with money provided by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, the Florida Baptist Convention, and Florida Baptist churches. In addition, four state Brotherhood departments donated funds: Texas, \$7,500; Oklahoma, \$1,000; Louisiana, \$1,000; and South Carolina, \$4,000. The total contribution of Southern Baptists is expected to exceed \$25,000.

Earthquakes struck Ecuador on March 5 and 6, causing floods and mudslides. The government estimated 1,000 people are dead or missing and thousands are left homeless.

The Ecuadorian government is paying for the cargo plane's fuel, while their national airline, Ecuatoriana, is providing labor to load the Boeing 707 in Miami and unload it in Quito.

Ecuadorian Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries will be responsible for distribution.

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must be limited to 300 words and the editor reserves the right to trim those that are longer. Editorial prerogatives must be reserved under all circumstances, and the opinions of the letter writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Baptist Record. Only signed letters will be used, but the writer may request that his name be withheld.

Need for Christians

Editor:

I wish to comment on a letter in the March 12 issue of the Baptist Record. The name of the writer was withheld by request.

Paul began his books/letters to the different churches by identifying himself as "as apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God," Eph. 1:1. He was making the point that a man must be called to the gospel ministry of Christ by God. This has always been the way of God and, until recently, was the way the Protestant churches chose their ministries. The modern church has sunk low in our slide from Christ. It is not our "Southern Baptist seminaries" that turn out men/women of God; it is God who calls them. We need more men and women with the call of God and less who enter the ministry as a means of making a living.

It is much more important to be a Christian than it is to be a "Baptist." To be one doesn't mean you are both.

A Christian is a born-again believer in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He believes in the virgin birth, the total accuracy of the Bible as the infallible word of God, the cross as the only means of salvation, and the return of Christ in glory. Up until recently we Baptists believed these things and were Christians. The convention has fallen.

It is true that "Baptists" are independent thinkers, and I would not attempt to force my beliefs upon another. God created us to be independent and to make our own choice. We have the right to choose because of Christ's time on the cross. With this right, we must also accept our responsibility for the choice we make. We will answer for our own sins and our own independent thinking. I would say that all who claim to be Christians have an obligation to show Christ to a lost and dying world. To claim it means to live it.

I will close by saying this: we need

more Christians, not more Baptists, and more God called men/women servants instead of more educated pulpit fillers.

Jimmie D. Flake, pastor
Bethlehem Church
Ackerman

Hotel boycott

Editor:

Recently your paper ran an article regarding the boycotting of Holiday Inn hotels in California.

In April, the Baptist Missionary Association is holding a convention on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Biloxi Holiday Inn has received several letters and telephone calls cancelling reservations and boycotting our motel by this convention. Their church group has informed us that despite our convenient proximity to the Mississippi Coast Coliseum, they will not stay with us, because we according to their erroneous accusations show pornographic movies in our guest rooms. I would appreciate the opportunity to clarify this matter.

I do not presume to speak for other motels, but I wish to assure your readers that the Biloxi Holiday Inn,

and the two Gulfport Holiday Inns, do not have movies-for-pay. Our TVs are on the local cable with Home Box Office included. While a portion of the material on HBO may be offensive to certain guests, so may the material on the regular networks, and they need not watch any of it. That is a personal freedom of choice.

It is unfortunate that a morality call to boycott the entire chain seems to have been issued without any attempt to learn which of the motels participate. This publicity has adversely influenced the public, and has caused undeserved attacks on this establishment. We have unfairly been found "guilty by association."

Thank you for allowing me to correct this media misinformation. Your readers may be assured that Biloxi Holiday Inn continues to be a family motel, as in the past.

Wren M. Frith
Holiday Inn
Biloxi

Two things need to be pointed out. First, it is good that the Gulf Coast Holiday Inns do not show movies-for-pay, and they are to be commended for making the decision not to show them. Second, in all likelihood, very

few of the members of Baptist Missionary Association churches read the story mentioned in the Baptist Record. A lot of Southern Baptists did, however, and we are pleased to provide the opportunity of making this clarification. — Editor

BTN coverage of SBC slated for third year

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, June 16-18, will be telecast live gavel to gavel on the Baptist Telecommunication Network (BTN) for the third consecutive year.

More than 1,050 Southern Baptist churches and other organizations now subscribe to the denomination's teaching and training network.

Gomer Lesch, senior BTN consultant and anchor for SBC NewScene, will work again with Richard McCartney, executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission to help viewers understand the proceedings and keep abreast of developments.

Coverage will begin Tuesday, June 16, at 8:15 a.m. (CDT).

Four Mile Creek, Escatawpa, recognizes missionary organizations

Four Mile Creek Church, Escatawpa, held recognition service for its WMU, Acteens, GAs, RAs, and Mission Friends. The theme was "People Need the Lord." Kenny Goff, pastor, presented a message.



RAs, pictured, back row, from left, are Bubba Blank, Stephen Griffin, Mark Rachel, Ryan Griffin, Brian Davis, and Chris Barrow, director. Front row, John Holland, Dusty Goff, Todd Davis, Daniel Perry, Donald Pierce, James Pierce, and Jesse Burgett. Not pictured is David Sumrall.



GAs, pictured, from left, front row, Tracy Trehern, Konnie Barrow, Charlotte Harrell, Lydia Whatley, Jennifer Perry, and Tonya Pierce. Middle row, Becky Burgett, Brandi Blank, Christy Blank, Shanna Crowley, Tracy McKnight, Heather Mills, Natashi Thompson, Shira Harrell, and Dena Goff. Back row, Sharon Holland, leader (left), and Teresa Mathews (right) director.



Pictured, are Mission Friends, from left, Jessica Mathews, Nathan Whatley, Ashley Holland, Avery Harrell, and Cheryl Pittman, director. Not pictured, Shawn Demoney, and Dustin Demoney.



Acteens, pictured, back row, from left, are Pam Clegg, leader, Amanda Mills, Christa Sherman, Stephanie Mills, Rita Miller, Amanda Elkes, and Martha Barrow, director. Front row, Tammy Rachel, Candi Barrow, Stacie Clegg, and Karen Barrow.



The WMU ladies are pictured, back row, from left, Sharon Holland, GA leader; Cheryl Pittman, Mission Friends leader; Teresa Mathews, GA director; Pam Clegg, Acteens leader; and Martha Barrow, Acteens director. Front row, are Burnalee Dobbs, mission study chairman; Pearlina Valentine, prayer chairman; Myrt Smith, program chairman; Earline Adams, mission action chairman; Thelma Spooner, president.

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Just for the Record



The Southerners, a Pike County group, presented a program of gospel music at Locust Street Church, McComb, March 29, at 7 p.m.

"Cardiac Rebounders," a support group organized by Mississippi Baptist Medical Center's Cardiac Rehabilitation Department, will meet Monday, April 6, at 6:30 p.m. on the fourth floor of the Imaging Center at 1405 North State Street in Jackson. The meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. to allow time for the American Heart Association-approved covered dish supper. Anyone who has ever been a cardiac patient or is the spouse of a cardiac patient is invited. To register call 968-3090.

First Church, Collinsville, Lauderdale Association, observed ground breaking ceremonies February 1. A new sanctuary will be constructed with potential seating for 450 people. David L. Sellers is pastor.



RA recognition service was held at Grace Church, Philadelphia, Feb. 15 during the morning worship service. Joe Akins, Gary Akins, and Ken Boyette are RA leaders. Pictured, front row, are Sonny Winstead, Keven Ryals, Jason Ryals, and James Tindle. Second row, Brian Weir, Brian Chadwick and Tony Chadwick. Third row, Joe Akins, Ken Boyette, Curt Wallace, Dewayne Davidson, Dennis Winstead, and Neil Chadwick. Fourth row, Ernie Pickle and Gary Akins.



Sue and Tom David depict the western style celebration at the youth sweetheart banquet held recently at Red Creek Church, Jackson County. Sue is WMU president; David is a deacon.



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4	7-18-87	8-1-87	Alaska	TBA

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Mississippi Baptist activities

- Apr. 8 Directors of Missions Responding to Forced Termination of Pastors; Camp Garaywa; 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (CAPM)
- Apr. 9 New Staff Orientation and Associational Staff Meeting; Baptist Building; 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. (MBCB/PD)
- Apr. 10-11 State Handbell Festival-South; Gulfshore Assembly; 6 p.m. 10th-2:30 p.m., 11th (CM)
- Apr. 11 Day Camping Workshop; Camp Garaywa; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (CT/WMU)
- Mississippi Baptists in Broadcasting Meeting; Calvary BC, Jackson; 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (DBS)

Revival Dates

Trace Ridge, Ridgeland: Mar. 29-Apr. 1; Louis Smith, director, Church-Minister Relations and Annuit, MBCB, evangelist; Wendell Wiggins, music director; Jerry Odom, pastor.

Rehobeth, Pelahatchie: Apr. 12-17; regular Sunday services with dinner on the grounds; Mon.-Fri., 7:30 p.m.; Lowell Johnson, Brookhaven, evangelist; Robert Gillis, pastor.

Pineview, Hattiesburg: Apr. 5-10; services, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; V. L. Montgomery Jr., pastor, Calvary, Merryville, evangelist; Wayne Grothman, minister of music, Meadville, Meadville, music evangelist; Paul Blanchard, pastor.

Riverside, Waynesboro: April 12-17; Sunday, 11 a.m., 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Bill Hutto, pastor, Mt. Vernon, Newton County, evangelist; "Bo" Farrior, song leader at Riverside, music; M. H. Waltmon, pastor.

Center Terrace, Canton: Apr. 5-10; Sunday, 11 a.m., 7 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 a.m., 7:30 p.m.; Fred Moseley, Lucedale, evangelist; Wayne Carter, music evangelist; J. C. Prather, pastor.

First, Lake: April 5-10; Sunday, 11 a.m.; 7:00 nightly; John Gilbert, evangelist; Jerry Peagler, music; Ken McLemore, pastor.

Friendship East, Charleston: Apr. 2-4; 7 p.m. each night; Barry Worrell, music; Clarence Cooper, pastor.

Bethlehem, Pinola: Apr. 10-12; services, 7:30 each night; Sunday services, 10 a.m., 11 a.m. lunch served, fellowship hall with services following; Mitchell Donahue, Brookhaven, guest speaker; Jerome McLendon, pastor.

First, Louise: May 3; 11 a.m., Bill McClellan, Rosedale, message; dinner will follow in fellowship hall; C. C. Ard, pastor.

Antioch (Jasper): Mar. 13-15; one profession of faith, one by church letter, six rededications; LaVerne Summerlin, evangelist; Jelly Welborn, music director; Carey Bass, interim pastor.

First, Louise: May 3; 11 a.m., Bill McClellan, Rosedale, message; dinner will follow in fellowship hall; C. C. Ard, pastor.

Staff Changes

James Garner has resigned Edgefield Church, Attala Association. His last Sunday was March 22. He begins his new work at Melrose Church near Benton on March 29. He was chairman of the missions committee in Attala Association.

First Church, Durant, has called Jerry Bishop as its new pastor. Bishop is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. He is moving from Pleasant Hill, Quitman, where he served for five years. He and his wife, Charlotte, moved to Durant, March 25.

Mike Howell has resigned McCool Church, Attala Association, effective March 29. He has accepted a call from Fair River Church near Brookhaven, and began his ministry April 1. He served as moderator for the association, chairman of the nominations committee, and youth V.B.S. leader. His wife, Kay, was Associational W.M.U. Mission Action director.

Ray Wright has resigned from East County Line Church, Attala Association, to pursue continued education.

Jackie C. Hamilton has accepted the pastorate of First Church, West Point. On Sunday, March 29, he will

preach his last sermon as pastor of Highland Church, Meridian, where he has served for a little over 14 years.

Hamilton is a longtime member of the Christian Action Commission of the

Mississippi Baptist Convention. His wife, Barbara, has served as chairperson of the Division of Communications at Meridian Junior College. Also she is a consultant for ministers' wives and single adults for the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Their daughters, Lyn and Lisa, are married. Their son, Jonathan, is a senior at Meridian High School.



Thursday, April 2, 1987

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9

Names in the News

Pastor to retire

Wallace Pannell, pastor of Ingram Church, near Baldwin, for 27½ years, will retire after 39 years in the ministry. A graduate of Blue Mountain College, he has been pastor of Enterprise Church, Union County; Liberty Church, Pontotoc County; Mt. Olive Church, Tippah County; Martintown, New



Pannell

Harmony, and Beulah churches, Union County; Dumas Church, Tippah County, and preaching on Sunday afternoons at East Prentiss Church, Prentiss County, while serving at Ingram Church.

While pastor of Ingram Church, he baptized 300 people, had a number of additions by letter, and worked with many community projects. In 1979, Ingram Church became the parent church of Forrest Hill Mission with the help of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. A new sanctuary has been built at Forrest Hill, which is now debt free.

Pannell has moved into his new home in the Pratt Community, near Baldwin. When asked if he plans to

completely retire, he says "No, I strive more than ever to serve the Lord. I cannot sit down and waste time when there is so much of the Lord's work to be done. I plan to continue to serve the Lord wherever he leads."

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — Glenn A. Brown, associate director of planning and promotion for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma since 1973, was elected editor of the Baptist Messenger by state convention directors March 17.

Brown, 54, was to assume duties as the seventh editor of the 75-year-old Oklahoma Baptist newsjournal April 1.

Brown succeeds Richard McCartney who resigned in January to become executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth.

An Oklahoma convention employee since August 1971, Brown was religious education department

associate secretary and Church Training director until moving to the executive office in 1973.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — William E. Hull, a Southern Baptist pastor and former provost of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been named to the new position of provost of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

A Samford graduate and Birmingham native, Hull will assume the position of chief academic officer of the 4,000-student Alabama Baptist University June 1.

Hull, a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee, has been pastor of First Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., since 1975.



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Jesus before Pilate: "Condemned, but not guilty"

By Robert M. Hanvey
Luke 23:1-5, 13-25

This lesson begins a series of four lessons from the Book of Luke describing the last week of Jesus' earthly life, commonly known as Pas-



Hanvey

sion Week or the Passion narratives. These lessons will deal with Jesus' trial, his condemnation, his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his meeting with two followers on the road to Emmaus. Surely, these lessons will assist us in a greater understanding of our commitment to and our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. They will also assist us in determining how we might be better witnesses for him. Also, they will assist us in being able to deal with lost people from a more understandable position of what Jesus went through and what his death and resurrection mean for you and for me. During the course of these lessons let us be drawn closer to Christ in an understanding of all that he is to us.

The focal passage from Luke 23 teaches us that persons who read these words should begin

to act in accord with the right principles, rather than yielding to wrong. Was that not the case with Pilate? Was that not the case with Herod?

UNIFORM

These two men who became friends after their debate over what to do with the Christ surely give an example of people who succumb to the pressures of the day and who yield right to wrong.

As we view the focal passage, we would understand that the Jewish leaders brought Jesus before Pilate and charged Jesus with treason against Caesar. During the course of the trial, Pilate said that he had found no guilt or fault in Christ. The Jewish leaders then charged Jesus with stirring up the people. As a matter of fact, they said, "He has to come to us over this period of time and he has continued to give his particular view. He has continued to expound his thought, and has continued to stir up the people." Of course, the Jewish leaders found in Christ competition for their own cause and were not willing to allow the privilege of speaking and working in behalf of Almighty God. Down deeply the Jewish leaders of the day felt that Jesus was blaspheming

Almighty God in terms of what he was able to do through miracles and his real ministry to people.

Later Jesus was sent by Pilate to Herod, finding no guilt in him, and then Herod, after questioning Jesus but receiving no answer, sent the Christ back to Pilate. Pilate offered to punish Jesus in behalf of the Jews and the accusations which they brought against him, but their constant cry was to crucify him and release to them Barabbas. Barabbas was a condemned murderer and an insurrectionist. He was the one the people desired as opposed to the sinless, pure Jesus who was there in their midst. Is this not the succumbing to the pressures of the day? Is this not trading right for wrong?

Consequently, Pilate yielded to the pressures and to the continuing cries from the people to release Barabbas and crucify the Lord. Pilate felt he was doing what the people wanted and, as surely as he did, he succumbed to wrong instead of right.

In this lesson we as adults begin to learn the manner in which the Jewish leaders manipulated Pilate. We can understand the way people manipulate people today. We would not want to manipulate others. We would not want

to be manipulated by others. Surely, we can see this manipulation and this kind of process in the lives of Pilate and the Jewish people. We would also be concerned to note that adults who are willing to take a stand on moral issues can be challenged to take action when they study Pilate's reaction to the weaknesses of people. We should be willing to take a stand on moral issues each and every day. Adults who are tempted to do wrong can profit by studying how Pilate and the Jewish leaders acted in an evil manner because of peer pressure and self-interest.

People who are pushed into doing things by their colleagues or through peer pressure are those who really need to take a look at the actions of Pilate in response to the people. Adults can be challenged to evaluate their use of power. Pilate had the power to release the Lord. He had the power to overcome the pushiness of the people of Jerusalem. He had the power to do what was right. He had the power in his own hands to say "No" concerning Barabbas and to release Jesus.

Nonetheless, he misused his own personal power and authority in the face of threats.

Robert Hanvey is pastor, First, Hazlehurst.

The Kingdom: Present reality and future hope

Nathan L. Barber
Luke 17:20-30

The Pharisees seem to have pursued Jesus wherever he went. Their motives appear to be polluted. Their irritation with Jesus demonstrated their lack of understanding of who he



Barber

was and what he was all about. Their question on this occasion only underscored their obvious contempt and mistaken perception of Jesus and his ministry (loving service, Mark 10:45).

They questioned Jesus "as to when the kingdom of God was coming." They didn't really believe that Jesus could add to their understanding of the supposed coming kingdom or of the events which would bring it to pass. To the Jews the kingdom of God would be the overthrow of Rome's rule and the expulsion of the conquerors from their land. The kingdom would certainly cause one like unto David to ascend to the throne of Israel. Their nation would again be powerful, a force with which to be reckoned. In

short, it would be outward and observable, earthly, and brought about by political and/or military advantage. Jesus did not resemble

LIFE AND WORK

David, had gathered no army, had no political influence, and could not possibly be the Promised One (!) . . . what could he add to their trusted views?

Jesus' answer indicated that the kingdom of God was not what they expected it to be. Worldly kingdoms almost always proclaimed their coming with fanfare, pageantry, sound of trumpets, and the roll of drums. Jesus told them that the kingdom of God would not come with observable signs nor would they be able to designate its boundaries by saying "It is here," or "It is there." To emphasize this truth, Jesus revealed to the Pharisees that the kingdom of God was already in their midst. The kingdom was not just a future hope; it was a present reality in the person and ministry of Jesus. Someone expressed it like this, "Where the King is, there is the Kingdom."

In the New Testament the kingdom of God has primarily to do with the rule and reign of God in the life of an individual believer, and thus collectively in the church. Jesus not only perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament role of prophet and priest, he also fulfilled the role of king.

The Old Testament king was to perform his sacred ministry by ruling Israel on behalf of God. In like manner Jesus desires to perform his ministry by ruling and reigning as King over the domain (kingdom) of an individual's life on behalf of God.

Jesus then addressed the disciples concerning the future consummation. He declared to them that the days ahead in the disciple's lives would be such that they would "long to see one of the days of the Son of Man." It is unclear as to whether he meant they would long for one of the days when he had been present with them or one of the days when he would someday return. Regardless he said they would not see it.

However disciples of another day would need to be aware of the sensational claims and foolish speculations by some concerning the time and place of the future kingdom at the end of the age. Do not be mislead, and do not follow

such empty speculation.

When the Son of Man returned at the appointed time, there would be no mistake as to exactly what was taking place. It would be as clear and recognizable as the lightning flashing across the sky. It would not be of a secretive nature so that one person might recognize it and not another.

The lightning should also be related to the suddenness of his coming and of his judgement. Examples of Noah and Lot dramatically underscore the truth that when men least expect his coming and judgment, it will come upon them.

Some signs of the times are given in Scripture but nothing so definitive that man can predict how or when God will act in this matter. Jesus would later say to his own, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by his own authority" (Acts 1:7).

Instead his followers should devote themselves to the establishment of the rule and reign of God in the life of individuals "to the remotest part of the earth".

Nathan Barber is pastor, First, Bay St. Louis.

Satan tests Job's faith

By Charles Wesley
Job 1:8-12, 20-22; 2:4-10

As we read the book of Job we are struck with the relevancy of God's Word for all people at all times. The message of Job speaks directly to



those who are caught in the midst of circumstances that test their faith and character. A few years ago a song was popular entitled, "Why Me, Lord?" We might ask the question like this: "Lord, what have I done to deserve such problems?" In a like manner we may ask, "Why did God allow this to

happen to such a good person when wicked people continue to prosper?" The book of Job was written to help us deal with the unanswerable questions concerning suffering. In addition, the book of Job points out that our faith does not depend on pleasant circumstances, nor man's limited speculations. Rather, our faith trusts in the wisdom and power of the sovereign God. Three principal characters in the book of Job

are introduced to us in chapter one. First, we are introduced to Job as a man who "was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning

BIBLE BOOK

away from evil" (1:1, NASB). Job's desire was to please God and to serve God. Job was a man who possessed great wealth, but his wealth was not his god. Furthermore, as a result of Job's relationship with God, he had a good relationship with others. Also, Job's reverence for God and his integrity caused him to flee from evil. Moreover, Job had a concern not only for the physical needs of his family, but he was also concerned for the spiritual welfare of his family. Job served as a priest for his family and offered sacrifices on behalf of his children (1:5).

Second, we are introduced to God, who is described to us by the names he is called. The Hebrew name translated "God" in verses one through five is "Elohim," which speaks of the sovereignty and power of God. Then in verse six, God is called "Lord" which is translated from the Hebrew name "Yahweh" (Jehovah).

the covenant name for God. This is the name God gives to Moses in Exodus 3:14. The name "Yahweh" was considered so holy by the Jews that they would write the name without vowels to dissuade people from pronouncing the name. "Yahweh" represented the abiding love and care God has for his people.

Third, we are introduced to Satan who is presented in the role of an accuser. Job is accused by Satan of being faithful to God only for personal gain (1:9). Then, Satan accuses God of overprotecting Job. Satan declared that if God's protection was removed so that Job could experience suffering, Job would curse God to his face (1:10-11). However, God truly knew the faith of Job and trusted Job to remain faithful. Therefore, God allowed Satan to test Job and trusted Job to remain faithful. Therefore, God allowed Satan to test Job within limits. Satan could not at this time bring harm to Job's body (1:12). However, God later gives Satan permission to bring physical harm to Job, but spare Job's life (2:5-6). We should always remember that God has authority over Satan and will limit the power of Satan (1 Cor. 10:13).

As we read the story of the calamities that struck the life of Job, we wonder how any man could retain his sanity under such circumstances. Yet, Job would not sin and foolishly blame God (1:22). Each of us are challenged to consider how we respond to tragedy. We find it easy to trust God when circumstances are going our way. But do we trust God when the ground we are walking on is caving in? We should remember that the testing of our faith strengthens our faith and develops our character.

Consequently, we must trust God during times of suffering. Even though we may not understand the reason for present suffering, we are to acknowledge that God is in control of the world and that God will do what is right. As Christians, we are able to face suffering because we know that God's grace is sufficient for us (2 Cor. 12:9). Furthermore, we have the assurance "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18, NASB).

Wesley is pastor, Morrison Chapel, Cleveland.

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MARCH 13 - 26

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LAST YEAR'S PACE TOWARD
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"DRESS A CHILD AT EASTER"
GOAL OF \$140,000.00

Executive Director, Paul N. Nunnery, is having a difficult time with CASH FLOW management. The fiscal year's budget approved by the Board of Trustees demands \$5,410.95 daily to provide services for dependent and often neglected children.

The Village neither solicits nor accepts governmental funding. We are dependent on gifts from groups, churches and individuals beyond the 16% of budgeted needs provided through the Cooperative Program, the primary mission channel for Mississippi Baptists.

MAIL YOUR EASTER GIFT
TODAY TO

Mr. Paul N. Nunnery, Executive Director
The Baptist Children's Village
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Jackson, Mississippi, 39213
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Baptist Record

Southwestern student lets dummy do the talking

By Elizabeth Watson

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Lee Pitts lets a dummy do the talking when she shares the gospel.

The Southwestern Seminary student is a ventriloquist. Through Nicky, her wooden puppet, Pitts puts smiles on faces with the story of a living Christ.

But smiling is something Pitts only recently learned to do herself.

She grew up in a broken home in Alabama, void of physical and emotional warmth. For eight years she lived in a trailer house with no heat or hot water, thankful for the single blanket on her bed.

Thinking she was the most unfortunate and "ugliest girl in the world," Pitts considered committing suicide at age 12. But through a local church's bus ministry and Vacation Bible School, she found a reason to live.

"I discovered there was someone who loved me — Jesus," says Pitts. "I accepted Christ at that time, but there were still many hard roads I had to travel. Parental quarreling and family break-ups never stopped, so I often changed schools three or four times each year."

When Pitts was 15, her stepfather held her family hostage, threatening to kill them if they left the house. Pitts and her brother escaped through a window and ran for help to Bob and Betty DeLoach, her church choir director and his wife.

The DeLoaches took Pitts as a foster child. She traveled with them around Alabama as a member of the church youth choir and puppet team. Pitts first saw ventriloquy performed on one of these trips.

"The ventriloquists who traveled with Dad's team fascinated me," Pitts remembers. "So I decided to secretly learn the art myself and surprise

my foster parents."

Her first "dummy" was an old Simon Says doll discovered in a church closet. In only a few months she mastered the pronunciation of the ventriloquy alphabet. With "Little Nicky," a puppet she borrowed from a church in Georgia, she soon was using her newly developed talent.

"Nicky helped me blossom as a young lady," Pitts says. "Because he is able to say things I could never say, he's like the other side of me no one ever saw."

"My ventriloquy ministry is proof that God uses ordinary people for his extraordinary purposes. The message

Nicky and I share with others is that God is not concerned with our abilities but with our availability."

Pitts draws large crowds with Nicky. She has ministered in more than 500 churches and schools. But it is the powerful testimony she shares through Nicky that causes people to seek new lives in Christ.

"People can relate to the 'hard knocks,'" Pitts says. "Even though I have been through so much hurt, God has healed me, and that's encouraging to people. People today need encouragement."

Elizabeth Watson is a student at Southwestern Seminary.



Lee Pitts, Southwestern Seminary student, entertains friends in Barnard Hall with her dummies Nicky and Suzie. Pitts is a ventriloquist who uses the puppets in evangelism ministry. (Photo by Bobby Gilstrap)

Airport closing will not delay May 4-7 innerrancy conference

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — The national Conference on Biblical Innerrancy is still on schedule even though flights into the Asheville, N.C., airport have been grounded for the opening day.

Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., announced March 13 that the Asheville airport will be closed for resurfacing of runways from 11 p.m. May 1 until 6:50 a.m. May 5.

The conference is scheduled May 4-7 at nearby Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Ridgecrest has scheduled shuttle service from two alternate airports to the conference center. Conference

participants should schedule flights into either the Greenville/Spartanburg, S.C., airport or the Charlotte, N.C., airport, said Betty Hicks, a spokeswoman for Ridgecrest.

Innerrancy Conference hospitality rooms will be clearly marked at both airports May 3 and 4, Hicks said. Participants should wait there until the next shuttle to Ridgecrest arrives.

Hicks said Greenville/Spartanburg, the preferred airport, is a one-and-one-half hour drive from Ridgecrest. The Charlotte airport is a two-hour drive, she said. Special shuttle rates will be \$15 per person from the Greenville/Spartanburg airport and \$18 per person from Charlotte.

Participants should plan to depart from the Asheville airport, which will have reopened by the time the conference ends, Hicks said.

The nearly 700 people already registered for the conference will receive a card in the mail requesting flight information, Hicks said. These cards should be returned to Ridgecrest with flight number, arrival time, date of arrival, and airport so that shuttle schedules may be planned.

Transportation questions should be directed to Hicks at Ridgecrest, P.O. Box 128, Ridgecrest, N.C. 28770, (704) 669-8022.

Easter specials

ACTS Satellite Network, Inc.

Sunday, April 12

2:30 p.m. Replace "Sunday Selection" with "Power of the Resurrection."

Toward the end of his life in a Roman prison, Peter recalls the drama of Jesus' last days for a young Christian imprisoned with him. Through Peter's eyes we relive Jesus' final visit to Jerusalem, his growing conflict with the religious establishment, the triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Last Supper with his disciples, his arrest, trial, death, and resurrection.

Tuesday, April 14

9:00 p.m. Replace "In Concert" with "Gospel According to Saint John." Special from ACTS of Northern Virginia, Inc.

A walking tour of the Holy Land with reference to the Gospel of John.

Wednesday, April 15

8:30 p.m. Replace "From Jumpstreet" with "Dawn's New Light."

A musical, dramatic presentation portraying the crucifixion and resurrection from the viewpoint of the disciples.

Friday, April 17

8:30 p.m. Replace "Prime Timers" with "The King."

Musical portrayal of the Easter story performed by the choir and orchestra of the First Baptist Church of Houston, Texas.

9:00 p.m. Replacing "Country Crossroads" with "Joy Comes in the Morning."

A biblical portrayal of Jesus' crucifixion through music and drama performed by the 300-voice choir of the First Baptist Church of Richardson, Texas.

Acteens return, recovery called an answer to prayer

By Ken Camp

WACO, Texas (BP) — A weekend trip to a statewide Acteens meeting in 1986 turned into a nightmare for three teenage girls and their adult counselor.

But when two of the girls and their leader returned to the Texas Acteens IMPACT meeting this year, it was a dream come true for them and their prayer partners throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

Acteens Stefani Johnson, Carrie Bass, and Kelly Lynn Greene and their adult leader, Melanie Tate — all from University Church in Fort Worth — were struck by a car on the campus of Baylor University here during the Texas Acteens IMPACT conference in March 1986. Stefani and Carrie sustained severe head injuries in the accident, Kelly suffered a concussion and knee, tendon and, ligament damage and Tate seriously injured her legs. Stefani — the most seriously injured victim — was semi-conscious for several months, and she did not speak her first words for almost six months.

In spite of their fears and their memories of the year before, Carrie, Kelly, and Mrs. Tate returned to the Baylor campus March 6-8 as part of a group of 30 persons from University Church who attended Acteens IMPACT 1987.

"Stefani really wanted to come, but everyone was afraid for her to make the long trip," said Tate. "We're taking a Baylor sweatshirt home to her."

Tate said Stefani recently was able to stand for the first time since her accident, and she underwent eye surgery to correct double vision. After extensive work with a physical therapist and a speech therapist, she is making slow but steady progress.

"She was able to memorize the scriptures to complete her queen step (an Acteens rank), and she will be in the recognition services at church in May," said Tate.

Tate, who was in a cast for 9 months, now walks with the aid of a cane.

At an examination the week prior to the recent Acteens IMPACT meeting, doctors assured her she should be able to set the walking stick aside in six to eight months.

Carrie, who originally was listed as critical and was unconscious for 20 hours following the accident, said both its positive and negative effects have been lasting for her.

"Some things are harder for me because of the head injury, such as memory," she said. "But I feel like I'm closer to my parents and my church, and I've been a lot closer to God."

"I was scared, but after coming back it's no problem," said Kelly.

Ken Camp writes for Texas Baptists.

Baptist Record

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